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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SRI LANKA

SUCCESS STORY

Local Civil Society Organization Empowers Internally Displaced Persons



Photo by IFES

"If I'm to get a good government job, I need to be registered as a voter, and I also want to have a say in bringing in a leader who'll truly represent us, and work with our wellbeing at heart"
- Mr. Thibagar



Photo by IFES

Mr. Thibagar was displaced from his hometown of Mirissuvul, located on the Jaffna peninsula, a region of Sri Lanka devastated by more than 25 years of civil war. As a result of his displacement, he never knew how to register to vote. As a beneficiary of USAID's voter registration awareness program implemented by the Home for Human Rights (HHR), he realized the importance of voting and decided to register.

The program registered 60 residents from Mirissuvul as new voters and with USAID support, a total of 2,500 new voters were registered in the Jaffna District.

Founded in 1977 in Jaffna, HHR was one of the first legal aid organizations to support victims and survivors of ethnic conflict. With USAID support, the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) assisted HHR to increase public awareness of voting rights, and educate voters on their civic responsibility to vote. Through street theater programs, public discussion forums and public awareness activities in targeted areas, HHR successfully increased the number of registered voters among targeted vulnerable groups.

Mr. Thibagar, was one of over 600,000 people reached by HHR's targeted voter education programs that disseminated information through radio public service announcements, printed education materials, and public outreach events in 56 villages. These activities resulted in increasing the number of newly registered voters and increasing awareness on civic rights amidst the community.